

The Brand of You Self Assessment

What We Know About Brands

Many professions, including medicine, can benefit from having some form of brand identity. Brands can help you:

- Create an identity
- Build your reputation
- Clarify your strategy
- Allocate resources
- Enhance performance
- Increase financial success

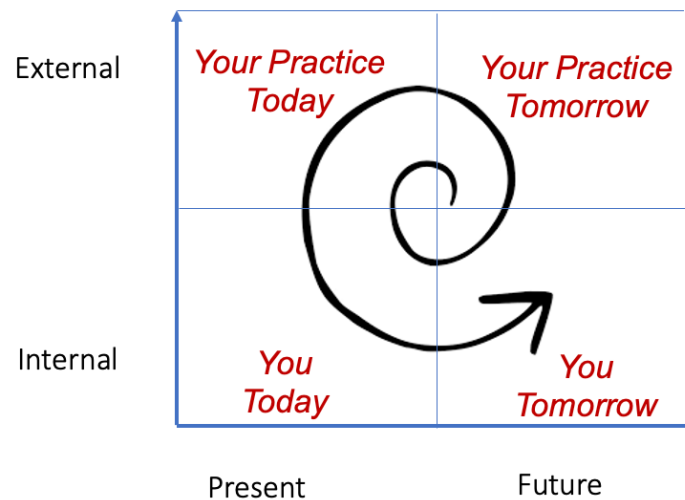
Yet many professionals do not take the time to reflect and strategize about building their brand in a deliberate and sustained way. This self-assessment will help you take some steps in this direction.

Start With Why



Many authors have written about the benefits of brands and how to deploy them. A good example is Simon Sinek in his book “Start With Why”. This is a good reference for any professional seeking to define a clearer identity for their practice that defines who they are and what they bring to their patients and their profession.

Consider Internal & External, Past & Present



Source: A. Craggs

The purpose of a clear brand strategy is to develop your practice in a more impactful way while reflecting your own skills and experience. A great brand can help you create a legacy that reflects who you are, your achievements, and your unique contribution to the field. A good way to think about branding is both as a way to create and reinforce your personal identity, and a way to express your vision as a professional. The above matrix can be a helpful guide for this.

Self-Assessment – Your Internal Brand

To assess your personal internal brand, consider the following questions:

Qualifications

- What are your qualifications, both professional and informal (such as diplomas or short courses)?
- Which of your qualifications provides you with knowledge or capabilities unique to you?
- How do these define who you are?
- How can this create a more unique brand as a surgeon?

Expertise

- What is your particular expertise as a surgeon?
- Do you have certain methods or techniques that are unique to you?
- Could you become better known for these specific attributes?
- How could this contribute to building your personal brand?

Track Record

- This is linked to expertise, but focuses more on your achievements
- What accomplishments are you most proud of, and how could you make these more public?
- Is there a body of work or research that is unique to you?
- How could these help define your brand in a more unique way?

Reputation

- What do patients, colleagues and medical professionals say about you?
- What is your image in the marketplace, on social media and in professional circles?
- What are the strongest aspects of your reputation that you can highlight as your brand?
- How would you communicate this to others to further build your profile?

Digital Footprint

- Do you have a digital footprint through websites, social media, podcasts, or blogs?
- What might you do to enhance your presence on these platforms?
- How could this reinforce and expand your personal brand?

Physical Footprint

- Where do you practice and what environment have you created as a professional?
- How well does this represent who you are and your values?
- How could your physical environment further reinforce your personal brand?

Aspirations

- What are your long-term aspirations and how do these define you as a professional?
- Do you have a plan in place to deliver these?
- Could you share your aspirations more publicly, and how could this support your personal brand?

Self-Assessment – Your External Brand

To assess your professional external brand, consider the following questions:

Business Strategy

- Do you have a business strategy?
- Does it position you in a unique way within your profession?
- How could your daily business activities bring your strategy and brand to life?

Identity

- Do you have a company or practice identity?
- Does it accurately reflect your goals and aspirations as a surgeon?
- How could this sharpen and expand your brand?

Reputation

- What is the reputation of your practice (as distinct from your personal reputation)?
- Are there areas of your practice that you could improve or expand?
- Do you have any reputational blind spots that need addressing, and how could you do so?

Resources

- What resources make up your practice: people, space, equipment, materials?
- Do these resources represent your brand in the way you want them to?
- How could you reallocate your resources to better support brand-building?

Performance

- Is your business performance consistently of high quality?
- Are there any gaps in your performance or patient outcomes that need to be addressed?
- Can you eliminate low performing activities and do more of what you do best?
- Do you need to share your performance record to enhance your brand?

Financial Results

- Do your financial results match your brand aspirations e.g. price point or market positioning?
- How could you further deliver financial results that enhance your brand?
- What non-financial markers (such as pro-bono work) could also support your business brand?

Actions You Can Take

Review the above questions and decide how satisfied you are with your answers.

Strengths: for any questions you are fully satisfied with

- Identify what good practices have created your brand so far
- How can you develop these more in the future to expand your brand impact?

Weaknesses: for questions you are not satisfied with, or if not sure of the answer

- Analyze what has caused your brand weaknesses: is it lack of focus, resources, or vision?
- What specific actions can you take to close the gaps?

Examples of actions for improving weaknesses:

Personal & Internal

- Updating your personal profile online and adding a new bio to your practice materials
- Adding your latest accomplishments, cases, teachings or research to your online profile
- Deliberately building a personal profile with case studies or patient outcomes
- Developing a plan to share and communicate more about yourself in conferences and articles

Professional & External

- Refreshing your website, logo, brand name or professional materials
- Creating a marketing campaign that clearly communicates your brand identity and values
- Allocating resources from your practice to more brand building activities
- Refreshing your business plan to reflect your vision and ambitions

Summary

Building a personal and professional brand around a set of clear objectives can power up your practice and be a strong motivator for professional development. This is especially true for surgeons who run their own practices and may not have the support structures of a large organization to provide an identity. The key to great brand building is having a powerful vision that you feel strongly connected to, and then delivering consistently against that vision so you become known personally and professionally for something that is unique to you.